



**Cornelius, by the Grace of God and favour
of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of
Halifax :**

**To the Clergy, Religious Orders, and Laity of
the Diocese, Health and Benediction in
the Lord.**

DEARLY BELOVED :

It is a well-known fact that all men, in every age, have longed for, and sought after perfect happiness. The objects which seemed to them to promise this happiness, and the methods of attaining them, have been very different; but the impulse which moved to action, and the desire which shaped the course, have been identical. Human nature is borne, by a vehement tendency, towards that peace and quiet of the rational faculties and appetites, in which felicity consists. Man is the work of God's right hand. An infinitely wise Creator must have constituted an absolutely final end proportioned to the nature of his creature, and attainable by a right use of the means placed at its disposal.

For a rational being like man, there must be, then, a rational end, which may be reached by acting in a rational manner. It is in the manner of acting that our free will has its place, finds its opportunity of meriting and meets its awful responsibility. We cannot seriously wish to be unhappy; we cannot successfully resist the tendency, in general, to happiness; we can, however, by the overmastering power of our free will endure pain and suffering

patiently—yea, joyfully—and we can control and direct that tendency aright.

Since, then, all men tend, by a natural impulse, to a good which will make them supremely happy, this impulse must have been implanted in their nature by God, the Creator. Now, since He is infinitely wise as well as loving, He could not have done this without having, at the same time, constituted a final end for man, in which that tendency to happiness should find everlasting rest. In what does that final end consist? How is it to be attained? These are questions worthy of the serious consideration of all reasonable men; for it is only by understanding them aright that we can rise to the true dignity of our nature, apprehend our duties, and appreciate our advantages as Christians and children of God. What object can satisfy the longings of our rational appetite, dispel every fear of loss or change, banish forever all possibility of pain, or sorrow, or worry, and fill up the full measure of perfect and unalloyed happiness? Can any of the various earthly goods, in the pursuit of which so many expend time, and energy, and life itself, do this? Assuredly not; for although our soul is finite, yet it has a craving for, and a capacity of universal happiness which no created object can satisfy. Give, if it were possible, all the riches, glory, power, honour and esteem of the world to one man, and think you would he be perfectly happy? Would not the fear of loss haunt him? Would not the infirmities of human nature cast their shadows round him? Would not the spectre of death sit at the festive board defying his power to forbid him entrance, or his riches to stay his approach? And apart from all these ills, the soul would look beyond the special and particular goods so abundantly possessed, to a universal good which it had not. It is evi-

dent, therefore, that perfect happiness cannot be had in this world ; it must be looked for in another state of life—in the hereafter.

Much of the misery, and most of the evils that surround us, arise from the fact that so many refuse to recognize this salutary truth. No doubt, in theory, all will admit that perfect happiness cannot be found here below ; yet we see how many so shape their conduct, and employ their time and talents, as if there were no other end for man than the acquisition of perishable goods, or the gratification of one's whims, or fancies, or passions. The voice of conscience is stifled ; the sense of duty disregarded ; the dignity of human nature debased ; honesty and honour laughed at as something antiquated ; the glorious gifts of intelligence and free will perverted from their noble purposes to base uses,—all, all is forgotten in the reckless quest for pleasure, or for the means to lead an idle life, without an aim worthy of a rational being, or an object save self-indulgence. What wonder, then, that on all sides the bitter cry of baffled schemes, and the low, sad wail of broken, wasted lives, are heard ? Poor wayward hearts, with unlimited possibilities for good, if guided aright, have been left untrained and undisciplined in youth, and ruthlessly exposed to the danger that lurks in the practical maxims of a social system that lives without God, and the corruption that openly invites to evil in so many of the publications of our time. Poor wayward hearts ! Shall we be surprised if you make shipwreck of your character, blast your lives, and find only vanity and affliction of spirit ? The world is trying now, as it tried in the time of St. Paul, to live without God, and you are partly the victims, and partly the willing dupes of this mad attempt. Man may, indeed, put God out of his life ; but he cannot change His laws, nor escape the consequence

of violating them. Whether we wish it or not, God rules the world and exacts our homage and obedience. If we cheerfully give them we shall enjoy a fair measure of happiness in life, and ensure everlasting bliss; if we refuse, then even though worldly goods may abound, they will give no real pleasure here, and the disappointment of to-day will become the despair of eternity. God lives, and rules, and walks in His own world, and is, although unseen, intimately present to all His creatures. Man has been created to enjoy Him as his final end; hence, the human heart can find rest in Him alone; hence, too, the sadness, anguish of spirit, and bitter disappointment of those who seek for pleasure outside of, or in contradiction to His law.

The Apostle St. Paul gives an apt illustration of the manner in which we should work to attain our final end. He says:—"Know you not that they who run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the crown? So run that you may obtain." (I Cor. IX—24). The successful runner, the one who bears off the prize, exerts all his powers, and keeps his attention fixed on the goal towards which he is tending. He does not stop to pick up flowers on the roadside, nor to hold idle conversations with companions. He never turns aside from the straight path; but with mind alert to avoid obstacles, and with will firm set on success, he bends all his energies to outdistance his rivals. Now, according to the Apostle, we must so run if we wish to gain the prize of eternal felicity. "So run that you may obtain." Earnestness of purpose and perseverance are primary requisites. Moreover the Apostle adds:—"And every one that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things: and they, indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one." (25). What a subject for serious reflection, what a

comment on our own folly is suggested by these words ! The athlete in training for a race,—even the debased competitors in the prize-ring, control their passions, and deny their appetites to win a corruptible prize ; and Christians, for whom there is prepared an unfading crown, a seat of glory, and an eternity of happiness, are too indifferent, or thoughtless, or vicious, to put a curb on their sinful inclinations, or to deny themselves any of the pleasures they can find in the frivolities of life, to secure these eternal rewards. The prize-fighter may be a very low-minded creature ; but assuredly he has some qualities more rational and ennobling than the person who, having the knowledge of a Christian, leads the life of a sensualist.

Let us further learn from the Apostle how we should act. “I, therefore, so run, not as at an uncertainty ; I so fight, not as one beating the air.” (26) How many in our day deny the great truths of revelation, or doubt as to their binding force on our conscience ? Against them the words of St. Paul bear witness. He was absolutely sure that an eternal crown could be gained by each one ; he was, under God’s grace, and by a right use of his free will, shaping his course in a manner which he knew of a certainty would enable him to gain it. He was not beating the air in doubt and misgiving ; he was up and doing, with the strength and perseverance that come of invincible faith. He was denying himself too, for he says—“But I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection.” (27) There is no other way of winning in the race ; we must deny ourselves, restrain our evil passions, and with unwavering Faith so run that we may obtain the incorruptible crown. There are those who make no effort to win ; and there are those who wish to receive the reward without too much inconvenience to themselves. These latter would sit with our Saviour at the marriage feast, or

follow his triumphal entry into Jerusalem; but they shrink from the chalice of Gethsemani, and from the Cross of Calvary. Let us not deceive ourselves, Dearly Beloved; if we wish to reign with Christ we must first suffer with Him. Self-denial, honesty, humility, purity of thought, word, and action, lively Faith, unfaltering Hope, ardent Charity, are necessary for those who would be Victors in the race for true and enduring happiness.

These truths should be diligently taught by parents to their children, and the principles of Christian action carefully instilled into their minds in youth, so that becoming deeply rooted in their consciences, they may exercise a salutary and guiding influence over their conduct. Our Holy Father the Pope has recently told us in his Encyclical to the Bishops of Canada, that "purely scientific instruction," and, "vague and superficial notions of virtue," are not sufficient to form good Christians, or upright citizens. I ask you all to have a copy of that magnificent letter in your homes, to study it carefully, and to be guided by its wise and loving words. Would that all may see their truth, and recognizing that without "Religion" there is no moral education worthy of the name, none "truly efficacious," lay aside prejudices deliberately fostered by the secular spirit that is seeking to overthrow all supernatural teaching, and unite in proclaiming that God has a right to hold a place in all educational systems. Education without definite Religious principles has been put to the test in many communities; it has had a long and fair trial; it has had all that a lavish expenditure of public money could purchase in its favour, and now, in the judgment of thinking men, it stands condemned by its results. Where it has had its fullest scope, there lawlessness, municipal and state corruption, cheating in all the forms that an intellectual training makes possible, have

increased in startling proportions ; the spirit of religious observance has decreased, the sanctity of the home has been polluted, and, self-murder, the outcome of a gospel of despair, is affrighting Society. The agents of unbelief, with fair words and specious promises, deceived many well-meaning Christians into an acceptance of a pernicious system ; it is surely not too much to expect that they will now awake from their delusion, and help to restore the Creator to His rightful place among His creatures, and thus cure the ills that afflict society.

In the meantime, Dearly Beloved, be watchful over yourselves lest the integrity of your Faith be undermined by false doctrines, or motives of self-interest ; be anxiously watchful over your children, teaching them, from infancy, to love God, and to seek for happiness, not in the goods of this world which pass like a shadow, but in the enjoyment of God hereafter. Understand that our final end is not in this world ; hence only disappointment and anguish of spirit can result from a life uninfluenced and unguided by revealed Religion.

Imitate St. Paul, and bring your bodies into subjection by the chastisement of self-denial. This self-denial must not be merely in sinful pleasures, but, also at times, in harmless ones. Habits are formed by the repetition of the same act ; once acquired they become, so to speak, a second nature. Acquire the habit of self-denial, which gives strength and vigour to character, by practising acts of mortification. Be assured the one who never denies oneself a lawful pleasure will soon indulge in unlawful ones. Hence the Lenten Season has been established to teach us to restrain ourselves, and to master our sinful passions, by abstaining from food, or amusements otherwise quite lawful. Enter into the true spirit of Lent, and fit yourselves to become winners of the eternal prize that

goes to those who chastise their bodies, and bring their senses into subjection to the laws of a God-given Religion.

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We take this opportunity of reminding our Dear Brethren of the Clergy of the two annual collections ordered by the Holy See. We wish the amount collected to be forwarded at the earliest convenience by the Pastor.

The serious loss suffered by the Catholic congregation of Windsor is known to you all. Whilst each parish has, no doubt, its own needs, still a little help to those in want will not interfere with the ordinary collections. Hence we trust that during the course of the next four or five months, the various Pastors throughout the Diocese, will, on a Sunday to be named by them, cause a collection to be taken up in their respective Churches in aid of the building fund for the new Church at Windsor, the proceeds to be given to the Rev. Edmund Kennedy, who will communicate with the Reverend Pastors.

The Regulations for Lent are the same as last year.

The Blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, dear Brethren.

This Pastoral shall be read in every Church in the Diocese on the first Sunday after its reception that the Pastor shall officiate therein.

✠ C. O'BRIEN,
Archbishop of Halifax.

E. F. MURPHY, V. G.

HALIFAX, 15th Feb., 1898.

